

## **CULTURAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION PLAN**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Brand Associates is a 501(c)(3) non-profit membership organization dedicated to supporting a rich array of cultural, arts, and educational programming at the iconic Brand Library & Art Center. With a vast collection focused on visual arts and music, Brand has been a public library as part of the Glendale system since 1956, and provides a diverse set of free cultural programming in the arts, music, and dance for an equally diverse community.

Brand Associates was founded in 1969 to support and promote Brand Library & Art Center as an arts, cultural, educational, and historic resource for the region. An all-volunteer, board-run organization with no paid staff, the Board of Directors has historically reflected the population make-up of Glendale. The Board initially was composed of mostly white men who were prominent business leaders in Glendale; over time, the Board shifted to be mostly female-led, though still overwhelmingly white in its make-up. Now the population of Glendale is increasingly diverse and includes the largest Armenian immigrant population in the world, as well as large Korean, Latinx, and growing Black communities.

The cultural programming at Brand draws audience members from all of these diverse communities, especially to two well-known music series, a contemporary dance series, and gallery shows. The membership of the Associates and make-up of its Board have not kept pace with demographic changes in Glendale.

This Cultural Equity and Inclusion Plan is a commitment by the Board of Directors of the Associates of Brand to create an organization that reflects the communities we serve now and welcomes diverse, new communities. We see the immense value in a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive Board and membership that will strengthen our resources and relevance to our community at large, and ensure our sustainability as an organization.

### **THE THREE-PART PLAN**

This plan was initiated in January 2021 by Board member Sue Bell Yank with the input of the five other directors. In it, we identify three stakeholder groups: our Board of Directors, our membership base, and the artists who participate yearly in our Annual National Juried Exhibition of Works on Paper show. Specific goals, actions and measurable outcomes are assigned to each so that our progress can be monitored.

Our program aligns with and supports the CEI plans of the Brand Library & Arts Center and the City of Glendale. In the future we plan to address the need for a more diverse audience for the cultural programs we support. We will provide a CEI Report yearly at our Annual Members meeting and review this plan, with new goals and outcomes to be determined at that time.

## **Board of Directors**

**Context:** Our current board of 6 directors includes two male and four female members, skewing older, with no members under 35. The board is also mostly white, and live exclusively in Glendale, with most living near the Brand Library itself. This current size and lack of diversity limits our capacity and the efficacy of our outreach to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color) communities, younger people, and people in other neighborhoods in both Glendale and the wider region. We also are lacking artist and musician representation on our board, which is an important voice and perspective we need to include.

### **Goals:**

1. Set up a nominating committee to grow our board by 3-4 members over the next 2 years, privileging board candidates that are under 35; from Korean-American, Latinx, Black, or Armenian-American communities; are professional artists or musicians; and come from geographically diverse neighborhoods in South Glendale, the Verdugo Woodlands, or neighboring cities.
2. Provide diversity and anti-racism education to our Board.

### **Implementation:**

1. Allow for ad hoc or advisory membership to the board for candidates that may not have the time or resources to commit to the Board of Directors but would like to be involved and have their voices heard.
2. Provide in-depth anti-oppression and anti-racism training to our Board in order to inform new organizational directions and outreach efforts.
3. Create a board matrix and identify board candidates for diversification over the next 2 years.
4. Create a Nomination Committee to generate a list of new board candidates, vet, and bring in new directors.
5. Conduct necessary outreach to diverse organizations in Glendale to widen our search for potential board candidates.

### **Outcomes:**

1. Create and maintain a robust and living Cultural Equity policy that informs the organization moving forward.
2. Increase representation of target groups on the board by 30-40% over the next 2 years.
3. We see a qualitative transformative effect on the Board's understanding of oppression and systemic racism in their work and decision-making as a result of the trainings, with learnings evaluated through self-assessments.

## **Membership**

**Context:** Brand Associates currently has around 250 active members and is in the process of fully implementing a web-based membership management system and has recently updated its membership categories and benefits. Membership skews older and whiter than the general population but does include Armenian, Latinx and Korean-American members.

### **Goals:**

1. We commit to diversifying our membership from the following groups: those who are under 35; from Korean-American, Latinx, Black, or Armenian-American communities; and come from geographically diverse neighborhoods in South Glendale, the Verdugo Woodlands, or across the LA basin.
2. We commit to increasing language accessibility and programmatic cultural relevance to increase membership from these groups.

### **Implementation:**

1. Promote our new membership interface to current and potential members, including a new membership brochure in multiple languages.
2. Focus on personal contact with potential members at each event at Brand with a 'pitch' prior to the event and a table providing flyers and other promotional materials, including in other languages (starting with Korean, Spanish, and Armenian).
3. Make the schedule of performers for the next Classical Music series available in Korean, Spanish, and Armenian.
4. Offer general information about Brand Associates (mission and vision) on our website in multiple languages, including Korean, Spanish, and Armenian.

5. Conduct a membership survey focused on collecting data about potential members in our target groups and how we could serve them better, and learn what is relevant to them.
6. Actively conduct outreach to diverse BIPOC Glendale community groups to gather feedback about how to make a Brand Associates membership more relevant to their constituencies.
7. Work with the Brand Library to identify creative opportunities to engage with their diverse audience and cultivate prospective members.

**Outcomes:**

1. Membership grows by 20% in the next two years, with new members belonging largely to the target groups identified.
2. Increase in members joining Brand Associates from programs other than the music series.

**Works on Paper Artists**

**Context:**

Hundreds of artists across the nation (between 550-650) apply every year for Brand Associates' National Juried Exhibition of Works on Paper, out of which approximately 100 are ultimately selected. The artist fees and art sale percentages from this fundraiser are the organization's primary means of raising funds aside from its membership fees. The artists are from a variety of backgrounds and geographic areas, and range from hobbyists to professional working artists; the exhibition has been well-respected throughout its 48 iterations.

The show's artist fee structure has raised concerns, all the more stark in a time of pandemic and massive recession that has hit professional working artists particularly hard. We are seeking a robust set of younger, BIPOC, and emerging artists for our pool of artists, and examining ways to make the application process much more accessible to those groups.

**Goals:**

1. We commit to making the Brand Annual National Juried Exhibition of Works on Paper more accessible to applicants of diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, geographies, and socio-economic status.

## *BRAND ASSOCIATES CEI STATEMENT, POLICY & PLAN (FINAL)*

*Updated 3/17/21*

2. We commit to an exhibition that feels relevant and welcoming to artists in Glendale from diverse backgrounds.

### **Implementation:**

1. Actively pursue granting and sponsorship opportunities to underwrite some of the financial burden on artists, such as paying for the shipping of works, lowering or waiving fees, and providing scholarships to targeted groups or those with financial hardship.
2. Consider waiving the fee for Glendale students and reserving a portion of the show for encouraging and supporting the work of younger and BIPOC student artists.
3. Conduct targeted outreach to diverse groups of artists, and provide call for entry materials in multiple languages.
4. Review our publicity list and be sure that the call for entry is reaching diverse audiences.
5. Select BIPOC jurors and consult with them about the kind of outreach they would like to see.

### **Outcomes:**

1. We see a marked increase in the number of BIPOC and younger artists applying to the Works on Paper exhibitions, by collecting self-reported demographic information and feedback from an artist survey.
2. We are able to underwrite part or all of the financial burden for applying artists with financial hardship through grants or sponsorships.

### **Audience**

**Context:** Since we are primarily a supportive rather than a programming entity, our next steps will be to address greater diversity, equity, and inclusion within the larger audience of Brand Library & Art Center and the Glendale Department of Library, Arts, and Culture and in alignment with each group's CEI plan. Once we find that alignment, we look forward to representing those goals here as indicative of the programming outcomes we hope to co-produce.